



1987

Lansdowne and Sedgley Fairmount Park, Philadelphia

Beth Anne Weidler
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LANSDOWNE AND SEDGLEY
FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA

Beth Anne Weidler

A THESIS

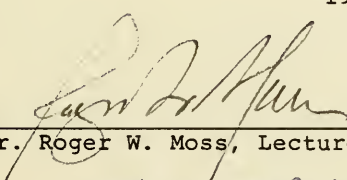
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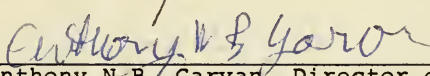
Presented to the faculties of the Univeristy of Pennsylvania
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

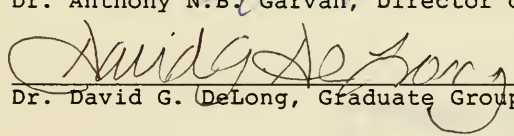
1987



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All houses wherein men have lived and died
Are haunted houses. Through the open doors
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide
With feet that make no sounds upon the floor.

"The Builders"

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

CHAPTER ONE

England had its Thames Valley villas and France its Loire chateaux. In America, on the beautiful Schuylkill River near Philadelphia, there developed a life and house style that was, for America, new and exciting. These houses were based on Old World models, but were adapted for American needs. The houses that were on the Schuylkill River banks possessed great architectural dignity. "The Schuylkill River homes are not like the Hudson or James where great distances separate and isolate. The Schuylkill has virgin scenery with unsurpassed opportunity for easy and frequent intercourse with the most agreeable of neighbors, as well as convenient proximity to the city."¹ Here the princes of the city, the merchants, could retreat and pass time in social contact with their neighbors, each familiar with the rules of polite society and each with the same basic breeding and upbringing.

The Schuylkill River banks were dotted with these estates, built mainly in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They were elegant statements of the taste and hospitality of the Philadelphia elite. Two of the finest of these were built on opposite banks, and have disappeared. One was architecturally significant,

one was important by association. Sedgley and Lansdowne were two of the more outstanding of the Schuylkill River houses, and the subject of this paper

Lansdowne (fig. 1) was begun in 1773 by John Penn, the Elder, (died 1795) the grandson of Pennsylvania's founder. It was a showplace of elegance in Philadelphia society. Famous statesmen were welcomed by John Penn and his wife, Ann Allen Penn, into their stately home, which became a center of polite entertainment in Philadelphia. In 1798, the wealthy merchant, William Bingham, acquired the property and continued its glittering career. Then, Joseph Bonaparte, the elder brother of Napoleon I and the former King of Spain, leased the mansion in 1816 before building Point Breeze, near Bordentown, New Jersey.

The second estate discussed here is Sedgley (fig. 2) which is significant for an entirely different reason. It is important for its place in architectural history. It was commissioned in 1799 by William Crammond (1754-1843) from Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820), who is now generally considered America's first professional architect. At the time, however, Latrobe was merely a temperamental European-trained architect with innovative ideas. The house he designed for Crammond was the first example of the Gothic style in the United States. This style was a continuation of the mid-eighteenth century revival that had become popular in England, as seen in James Wyatt's unexecuted design for a lodge at Frogmore

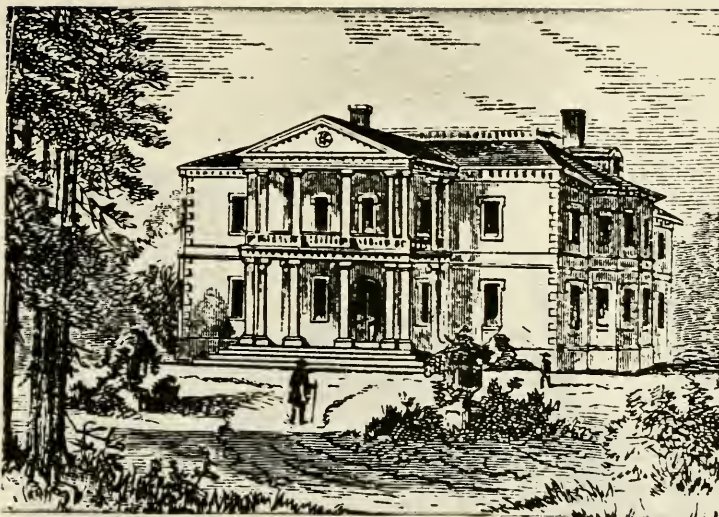


Fig. 1 Lansdowne
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Print Collection



Fig. 2 Sedgley. D.J. Kennedy from a Birch Print
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Kennedy Collection

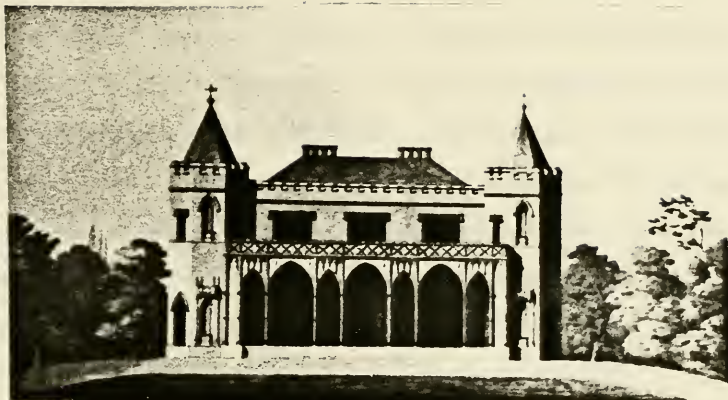


Fig. 3 Unexecuted design for a lodge at Frogmore House of 1791
James Wyatt. From Harris, The Design of the English
Country House, p. 159.

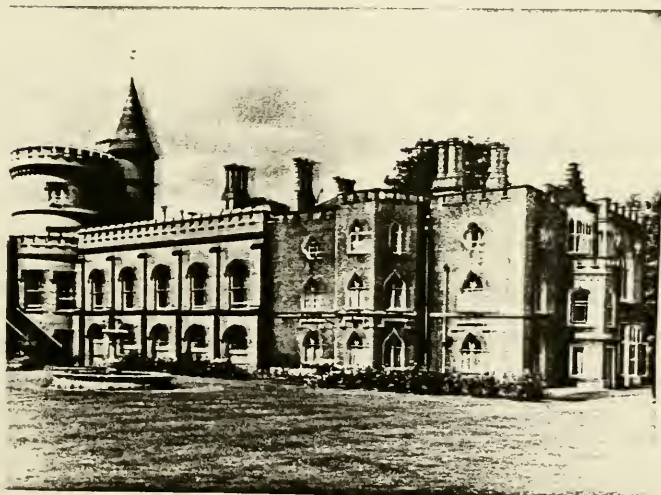


Fig. 4 Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, England.
From Andrews, American Gothic, pl. 2 p. 8.

House in Berkshire of 1791 (fig. 3) and, of course, Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill, which was begun in 1749. (Fig. 4)

In this thesis, I intend to trace these two river houses from their inception to their disappearance from the landscape of the Schuylkill. Both houses were lost through a combination of negligence and lack of foresight. These houses were symbols of the way of life that inspired them to be built and serve as fallen heroes in the battle to preserve what little remains of the Schuylkill architectural heritage.

Before either Lansdowne or Sedgley is examined, a background is required. What was the City of Philadelphia like at the time? Who were the gentry that built these country estates, and why did they choose to build where they did?

THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE

Philadelphia was a city of merchants, many of whom made their fortunes in the French and English wars, in both legitimate and illegitimate ways. This group of well-to-do merchants was either Anglican or Quaker. The Friends predominated in the early days of the colony. William Penn confessed in No Cross No Crown that the position of a gentleman was preferred to the "ranks of Inferior People"² With this position, however, came the responsibility to bring education and culture to

Philadelphia. God was showing favor to the Quakers in the early years, making them part of the gentry. By the Revolution however, the City was no longer a Quaker stronghold. In 1769, Quakers were 1/7 of the population, but only half of those who paid taxes of more than £100 were Friends. Of the seventeen wealthiest persons in Philadelphia, eight were Quakers, and four were raised in the faith. The remaining five were Anglicans.³ The Quakers were losing their membership to this faith. Quakerism had strict, unbending rules. Many opted for the leniency and pageantry of the Anglican faith; a faith that did not dwell on the vanity of worldly possession and show.⁴ This aristocratic circle, who controlled city commerce, politics and social life became increasingly solidified. After 100 years of development, it was not enough just to have wealth to be admitted into the sacrosanct world of Philadelphia gentry. One had to have inheritance and breeding to bolster one's social position. No more could enterprising shopkeepers like Charles Reade burst upon the scene and into the circle, just because he made his fortune in shrewd business dealings. Already family name was vital: Cadwalader, Shippen, Dickenson, Hill, Meredith and Morris. The ostentation and snobbery of the Old World aristocrat began to appear in these American imitators. Samuel Ward wrote in 1795: "Amongst the uppermost circles in Philadelphia, pride, haughtiness and ostentation are conspicuous; and it seems as if nothing could make them happier than an order of nobility

should be established."⁵

With this wealth came leisure. Women dressed in the latest, most expensive fashions from London. Balls and assemblies became lavish social affairs for the flaunting of wealth and taste in architecture, food and fashion. The men, no longer tied to the counting house, formed clubs and societies for specific interests. Philadelphia had developed into a urbane city. But unlike some contemporary cities in Europe, enough remained of Quaker plainness to keep Philadelphia from becoming too frivolous. There was still much stock placed in the special responsibility the wealthy had for the less fortunate, therefore many public charities grew out of the Philadelphian's "noblesse oblige"⁶.

So why would anyone wish to leave this exciting city? Their wealth gave them everything they could want: ample retail shops to supply every need, current European fashions, intellectual stimulation, refined entertainment. Life in Philadelphia was not exile. The communication with London was very close, as little as six weeks by ship. The Swedish naturalist, Peter Kalm, wrote in 1749: "Its fine appearance, good regulations, agreeable situation, natural advantages, trade, riches and power are by no means inferior to those of any, even of the most ancient towns in Europe."⁷

But Philadelphia had grown. By 1776, there were 6,057 houses in the City, compared to 1,864 in 1749.⁸ By 1776, the population had reached 40,000. Bristol was

listed as having a population of 36,000, Dublin slightly larger for the same period.⁹ Housing always seems to be a problem, with severe overcrowding in the poorer areas of the city. The large grid plan of streets was quickly cut into small alleys and lanes which seldom had a shaft of sunlight shine on them. Proud, writing a century after William Penn, complained that the city was cut up into these alleys and lanes which were not suitable for the heat of Philadelphia summers. Free movement of air, he said, was a requisite for good health.¹⁰ The streets were not clean, although provisions were made for them to be well drained. Where there was no sewer, open holes were dug in the streets to catch gutter water, but it also received all the dead animals and garbage people threw in the streets. Coaches, carts and racing horses were hazards to every citizen walking on the streets. The health of the upper class was generally good, considering, thanks to the growth of medical knowledge. But the entire city was helpless when struck by epidemics, such as smallpox and yellow fever.

Philadelphia was a low level town, the hottest and dampest of all the Eastern seaboard towns, even more than Charleston, Savannah, or the West Indies.¹¹ The wharfs jutting out into the Delaware River cut off the currents, causing rotting debris to be cast up on the banks. Below the city were swamps and marshes, which, with high water, overflowed and became stagnant in the summer sun. Clay

pits also held stagnant pools that became perfect breeding grounds for the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the carrier of yellow fever.

The bite of this little pest caused chills and pains in the head, back and limbs, accompanied by high temperatures. After a few days, the fever declined, but it occurred again with yellow skin, stale blood thrown up and black hemorrhages in the intestine. If the victim did not die the fever continued on to the typhoid state, with stupor, a dry brown tongue, a rapid feeble pulse and incontinent feces and urine. It was always fatal at this point. This was a visitation that came to Philadelphia every ten years for seventy years, the worst being in 1793. The doctors never saw the connection between the fever and the overabundance of mosquitoes. Five thousand people died from the fever in 1793 alone.

Philadelphia was a leading seaport, constantly exposed to passengers and crews carrying diseases. A small quarantine station was set up on an island in the Delaware, but a ship could slip by at heavy periods. In 1699, Isaac Norris, Sr., wrote, "This is quite the Barbados distemper."¹² In the subsequent years of 1717 and 1741, the yellow fever was called "Palatinate fever". People noted the outbreak of the fever with the influx of Germans from the Palatine region.¹³ Those who could flee the city during these outbreaks retreated to the country or to another colony.

Visitors to Philadelphia noted a lack of elegant city homes.¹⁴ Although houses such as the Powell and Hill-Physick-Keith houses did exist, the gentry of Philadelphia sought something else. They had a desire to ape their English contemporaries and own a country seat. They wanted to be like old country families or Whig grandees in England. This desire resulted in one of the earliest exoduses from a city in America.¹⁵ Of course, yellow fever and the "thundering of coaches, chariots, chaises, waggons, drays and the whole fraternity of noise"¹⁶ also encouraged the move to the country. But the desire to be an English squire pulled these families to the banks of the Schuylkill. Bridenbaugh writes in Rebels and Gentlemen; "Philadelphians were manifesting that preference for gardens and orchards, for country amusements in a rural setting, that had characterized them throughout history and that resulted during the eighteenth century in the most nearly perfect replica of English country life that it was possible for the New World to produce."¹⁷ Also, at this period in time, the picturesque movement was beginning. Simple communication with nature in surroundings unsullied by human hands could restore the spirit. This idea may also have been behind the move to the country of the Schuylkill.

With this new country life came the activities that copied current English fashion. In 1766, the Jockey Club was formed and held races which attracted good horseflesh from all over the colonies. Hunting became fashionable

in that same year when the Gloucester Hunt Club was established. Fishing, fowling and gardening became acceptable pastimes for the country squire. Their ladies imitated their British sisters by driving out in elegant carriages to tea or to take the air. The use of these carriages gave variety and mobility to social life on the Schuylkill.¹⁸ The country seats were never too far apart that visiting was an impossibility. Life in the country, yet near the city, created a town and country season, aping similar seasons in England.

The river houses that the Philadelphia gentry built were, of course, the height of fashion - the villa. "In the fashion anxious vocabulary of the beau mode, 'villa' became synonymous with all that was chic, petite, a la mode or dernier cri."¹⁹ These houses were following the models of what could be called "Neo-Palladianism". In his book, The Picturesque (London, 1967), Christopher Hussey states that these late eighteenth, early nineteenth century villas were in a relationship with the surrounding landscape. Each reflected on the other, creating a harmonious and pleasing unit. Out of this relaxation of classicism, the Picturesque movement took root and grew.

Palladio used the words, *case di villa*, to distinguish the owner's country estate from his city house. The villa "may be considered under ... different descriptions - First as the occasional and temporary retreats of the nobility and persons of fortune from what may be called their town residences, and must, of course, be in the

vicinity of the metropolis; secondly, as the country houses of wealthy citizens and persons in official stations, which also cannot be far removed from the capital...Elegance, compactness and convenience are the characteristics of such buildings..."²⁰ The villa was established as a middle class house; a house that was not a full size mansion on a large estate, but was nonetheless a house of quality and distinction, often inhabited by the new gentry, the merchants and professional men whose social position was on the increase. In the mid and late eighteenth century, there was an economic change in the system. It enabled this professional man to have a good investment return on stocks, just as his early eighteenth century counterpart would have received an income off of real estate. These merchants would take a small part of his capital to build a small, but dignified house, with just enough land to give the house a pleasant setting. The villa could be either urban in flavor, or, rustic, in which case it would be called a cottage orne.²¹

The plan of these country villas was moving away from the very formal classicism of Palladio. This post Neo-Palladianism played with all kinds of house plans, giving variety to each individual house. Often these houses had very formal facades. But behind these facades were long ranges of interconnecting rooms²² which could be manipulated to create the correct requirements for any social occasion, large or small. Another new innovation

was the elimination of the basement, in addition to a flow from room to room on the principle floor.²³ The basement was an Italian idea which created the necessity for an imposing stairway on both entrance and garden fronts. This "aloofness of height"²⁴ soon gave way to the French idea of walking straight out of the drawing room windows onto the lawns. The basement became a cellar and the servants, originally in this basement, were moved to a servant's block, an appendage to the house, often obscured by trees. Rooms of the true villa, under the leadership of Adam, began to be designed "en suite". This was a radical departure from the idea of the plan of the house as a series of different shaped boxes, each serving a purpose for either men or women. In the 1770s, society became less segregated and this was reflected in the "en suite" rooms, equipped with folding doors to facilitate differing uses of the rooms. It was difficult to create this open plan behind a symmetrical exterior, therefore an architect was usually employed.

In the 1830s, J.C. Loudon wrote that the ideal villa was "to be a place of agreeable retirement and not one of seclusion from the world. It should be situated, if possible, in a beautiful country within reach of a public road and at an easy distance from the metropolis."²⁵

The Philadelphia villas did just that. The Quakers led the way in country living, building "plantation houses" not far from the city, early in Philadelphia's history.

These houses were small and simple in the beginning, used only as day retreats or to escape the smallpox or the yellow fever. It was felt that it was better to return to town every night than risk the unhealthy vapours of country air at night.²⁶ The houses were plain and slightly furnished. In fact, if furniture did not meet with approval in the town house, it was sent to the country.²⁷ As these Quakers grew older and retired from business, many retired to their country estates, building additions to make them permanently habitable. One architecturally distinctive villa of this period is the house built by John Penn, called Solitude, which is now on the Zoo grounds. (Fig. 5)

By the time the Scull and Heap Map of Philadelphia (fig. 6) was published in 1752, the Schuylkill River banks boasted quite a few country estates. After 1755, there was a change in country living. Philadelphians had become prosperous on profits from the French and Indian Wars. Class divisions had become very distinct and the Philadelphia gentry was looking for ways to set themselves apart from others. A new phase in mansion buildings had begun. The houses, rather than being merely country retreats, became mansions of true architectural dignity. One example of this new phase is seen at Mount Pleasant. Each owner normally took great interest in the building of his house, for it reflected on his own taste and refinement. Pattern books were readily available and usually found in many gentleman's library. Benjamin



Fig. 5 Solitude, seat of John Penn. Birch View
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Print Collection, Penn residences

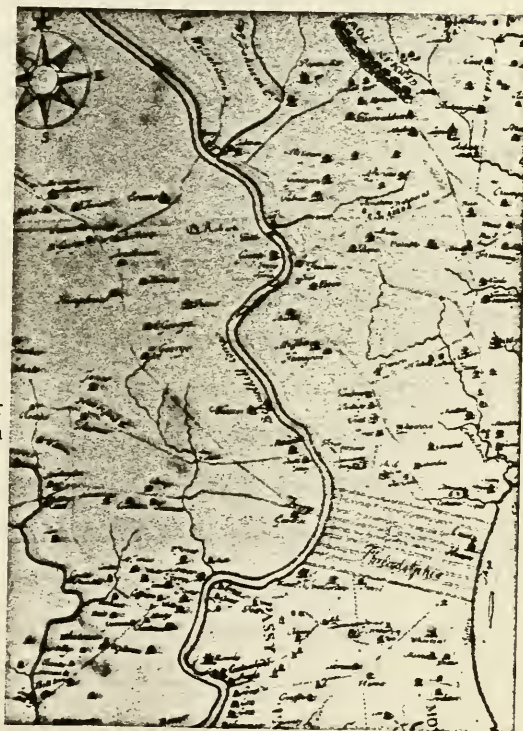


Fig. 6 Scull and Heap Map
1752 The John Carter
Brown Library, Brown
University.

Swan's Designs in Architecture is just one example. It was published in London in 1757 and in Philadelphia in 1775. From these pattern books, the master builder could remain abreast of architectural developments and incorporate them into the overall design. The houses that were built outside Philadelphia were by no means slavish reproductions of the English prototypes. The master craftsmen of Philadelphia were products of the traditional apprentice system that, through hands-on experience, imbued them with good sense and an eye for proportion. Bridenbaugh writes in Cities in the Wilderness, that the "talent and skill of master builders and accomplished gentlemen amateurs, who in adapting classicism of Palladio and Vitruvius, improved upon their British contemporaries by refusal to sacrifice practical comfort on the symmetrical altar of eighteenth century taste."²⁸ These villas were to be lived in first, to impress second, which created an indigenous form. Even ornament was subservient to comfortable living.

Certain characteristics did prevail in most of the river houses. There were usually two main facades, one for the entrance and one facing the river. This would correspond with the entrance and garden fronts of the British houses. Both of these facades would be equally elegant. The main block of the house stood alone, often with dependencies nearby, as seen at Mount Pleasant. In plan, most were a box, allowing for a central passage and rooms on each side. The second floor had four to five chambers, some with adjacent dressing rooms. Included

in the exterior design was a new innovation, a porch or piazza. The origins of this feature could be endlessly debated. Kennedy in Architecture, Men, Women and Money, suggests the piazza sprung up in North America wherever the sun was too hot, suggesting it was an indigenous form. It may have then been carried to the West Indies and back to America.²⁹ In the piazza are shadows of Africa and the Caribbean. Wherever it came from, it was a welcome addition to the Schuylkill villas to catch the river breezes. The porch normally ran the length of the major river facade, just off the main parlor. Here the family and guests could sit and enjoy the river and the picturesque views. The exterior walls were stuccoed and scored to resemble cut stone, a common eighteenth century practice.

The interiors of these new villas were richly furnished, further distinguishing this circle from the others in society. Considerable fortunes were invested in plate and furnishings. Behind the plain facades were lavish interiors of plaster creations and scenic wallpapers. Most of the interior decoration and furnishing was locally done. It was well known that the highest quality furniture, made by master craftsmen, who adapted London patterns could be found in Philadelphia. In 1765, Samuel Morris wrote to Samuel Powell, who was doing the Grand Tour of Europe from 1760 to 1767, in quest of culture and enjoyment, telling him not to bring back too much European furniture. Morris, in a patriotic spirit, knew that the local joiners would object to English goods

and that the quality in Philadelphia equalled anything found in Europe.³⁰ Ann Allen, the daughter of Chief Justice Allen, married John Penn in 1766. Her father gave her an elegant set of furniture which was probably used in their city house, but it shows the degree of elegance Ann would have exhibited at Lansdowne ten years later. "Elegant Cotton and 'India Chintz" hanging and appearance of the newest green and white worsted curtain for the parlour."³¹ From this, it can be said that Ann was aware of continental style. Only in the formal dining room were the windows done in traditional damask. Her furniture was all Chippendale: two settee, twelve chairs and a firescreen in burnished gold.³²

A few months before the British occupation of Philadelphia, a visitor wrote: "The country round this [city] is very pleasant, finely interspersed with genteel country seats, fields and orchards, for several miles, and along both rivers for a good many miles."³³ The English architectural historian, John Cornforth, reflected on the Schuylkill houses: "It is one of those odd accidents of history that the best illustrations of villa life as it was understood in England and developed along the banks of the Schuylkill River a few miles from the center of Philadelphia...Here on the little hills overlooking the river, or tucked away in glades and groves are a number of houses that to an English visitor at least, must immediately conjure up that semi-urban, semi-rural life so enjoyed by Horace Walpole's contemporaries at Richmond and Twickenham"³⁴

What happened to these beautiful testaments to grand domestic architecture? At least forty river houses have disappeared, and with them the life and associations connected to them. In 1822, a dam was opened on the Schuylkill River to assist the collection of water for the Water Works. This dam backed the water up for six miles. Tidal patterns were disturbed, creating sluggish pools where among other things, the mosquitoes that these people were getting away from, bred and bit.³⁵ Life styles also changed and the villa life went into decline. The real estate of these estates was quite valuable and, in some cases, the land was opened for speculation. Houses were abandoned, some were burned, some were demolished. Industry developed on the river and it became imperative to preserve the city's water supply.³⁶

Philadelphia wanted to be a cosmopolitan city like London or Paris, both of which had fashionable city parks. London had 500 acres for every 10,000 people. Lord Chatham described the London parks as the "lungs of the city", to "renovate the exhausted atmosphere which envelops these great gatherings of human beings. Without them, the air, loaded with noxious exhalations arising from the narrow and filthy streets and alleys and from the great accumulation of putrescent and decomposed matter, becomes impure and unwholesome...disease...lack of vigour... living in impure atmosphere."³⁷ Armed with the best of intentions, the founders of Fairmount Park set out to make their city healthy.

Fairmount Park began in 1812 when the city moved the Water Works from Latrobe's center city location to the Schuylkill River banks, below a hill known as Fair Mount. The Fairmount Water Works was originally a large two and a half story steam engine house, which can still be seen today. But this engine and its wheels caused a lot of trouble and expense. In 1819, it was decided to switch from steam to water power. A new water facility was built next to the old steam house. To facilitate this, the city had to purchase rights for the water power at the Falls of the Schuylkill from the Schuylkill Navigation Company. It was then that the dam was erected which disturbed the tidal patterns. A forebay, from which water would power the wheel, was blasted from the river's banks and the machinery and housing were built. It was completely operational by 1822. The five acres which were first included as Fairmount Park, which surrounded the Water Works, were landscaped into public gardens, perhaps the first municipal gardens in America.³⁸ The park was very popular with the citizens of Philadelphia and by 1828, the land size had quadrupled, and met with praises for its beauty.

Along with the Water Works, the rural cemetery at Laurel Hill attracted city dwellers for a picturesque stroll, a favorite pastime in the mid-nineteenth century.

These two projects, the Water Works and the cemetery, stimulated the growth of the park. In 1855, Lemon Hill and its 45 acres were dedicated for public use. (Lemon

Hill had actually been purchased by the City eleven years earlier in an attempt to protect the city's water supply.) In 1857, Sedgley Park, 33 acres, was acquired. At the time of the purchase of Sedgley, consulting engineer Frederic Graff wrote of the necessity of securing land to preserve the water. At the foot of Sedgley was a deep cove, he wrote, that with the sluggish river, created a slowing of the current. Here the sludge would accumulate from the dye houses, breweries and slaughter houses that might be built up river, if the city did not purchase the land and control its use. The result would be contaminated city water.³⁹ In 1867, the Pennsylvania General Assembly set aside a large area bordering the Schuylkill "forever as an open public place".⁴⁰ In 1876, the park became the home of the Centennial Exhibition, which spurred the development of the west bank. In 1896, the Fairmount Park Transportation Company began its six mile trolley run through the Park. Within fifty years, the automobile entered the Park. Already, in 1900, many of the Park's finer homes had been removed, often by the Park Commission itself. Open spaces and playing fields were created to facilitate healthy outdoor activity. Roads were created for carriage drives. Even as early as 1861, Sidney George Fisher could write in his diary, "The neighborhood is so much altered by streets, factories and buildings of all sorts that I could scarcely recognize it. Not much work appears to have been done at the park, except to

make some winding drives. A few clumps of trees, most of them evergreens, have been planted, but seem neglected. No work is going on there now, the city finances not being very flourishing..."⁴¹

1. Harold Donald Eberlein and Horace Mather Lippincott, The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia and Its Neighborhood, (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1912), p. 125.
2. William Penn, No Cross, No Crown, as quoted in Frederick B. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 1948), p. 112
3. Pennsylvania Archives, Proprietary Tax Lists for 1769, Third Series. XIV. 151-220; Quoted in Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 49. Persons of wealth are considered by Tolles to be those that paid more than \$500 in taxes.
4. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 141
5. Samuel Ward, Diary, 1795, as quoted by John Cornforth, "Fairmount Park, Philadelphia - I", Country Life, Vol. CLII, no. 3941, (Jan. 4, 1973), p. 19.
6. Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh, Rebels and Gentlemen, (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942), p. 183.
7. Peter Kalm, 1749, as quoted in Bridenbaugh, Rebels and Gentlemen, p. 11.
8. Bridenbaugh, Rebels and Gentlemen, p. 11.
9. Ibid, p. 3
10. Philadelphia newspaper, The Press, Sept. 7, 1857.
11. Joseph J. Kelley, Jr., Life and Times in Colonial Philadelphia, (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1973), p. 88. J.H. Powell, Bring Out Your Dead, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), p. vi.
12. Kelley, Life and Times..., p. 88.
13. Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness, (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1938), p. 401. Kelley, Life and Times..., p. 88.
14. Bridenbaugh, Rebels and Gentlemen, p. 12.
15. Ibid, p. 181.
16. Ibid, p. 12.
17. Ibid, p. 191.
18. Ibid, p. 221.
19. Pierre de la Ruffiniere, John Soane, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 266, as quoted by Mark Bower, "Loudon, Germantown Pa.", Unpublished thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1984), p. 5.

20. John Summerson, "The Idea of the Villa", Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol. CVII, no. 5035, (June 1959), p. 571.

21. John Summerson. Architecture in Britain 1530-1830, (London: Penguin Press, 1953), p. 320.

22. John Summerson, "Patronage and Performance", Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol CVII, no. 5035, (June 1959), p. 551.

23. John Summerson, Georgian London, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 257.

24. Ibid, p. 258.

25. J.C. Loudon, An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture, (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1839), p. 790-791.

26. Bridenbaugh, Rebels and Gentlemen, p. 191.

27. Ibid, p. 191

28. Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness, p. 306.

29. Roger Kennedy, Architecture, Men, Women and Money, (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 61.

30. Morris to Powell, 1765. Francis Rawle introduced the idea of the Grand Tour to Philadelphia in 1748. The Quakers had long been going to England to attend the Yearly Meetings. Samuel Powell acquired a cosmopolitan polish while abroad. When he returned to Philadelphia in 1767, he left the Quaker faith and was baptised by the minister of St. Peters. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 140-141.

31. Bridenbaugh, Rebels and Gentlemen, p. 204.

32. Ibid, p. 204.

33. John Cornforth, "Fairmount Park, Philadelphia - II", Country Life, Vol CLIII, no. 3942 (Jan. 18, 1973), p. 150.

34. Cornforth, Country Life, Jan. 4, 1973, p. 18.

35. Cornforth, Country Life, Jan. 18, 1973, p. 150.

36. Ibid, p. 150.

37. Sketch of Fairmount, Lemon Hill and the adjoining Grounds as a Public Park, Philadelphia, (Jan 1855), Historical Society of Pennsylvania., 17-18.

38. George B. Tatum, Penn's Great Town, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), p. 63-64.

39. Special Report of the Committee on City Property Relative to Sedgley Park, (Oct. 15, 1857), Historical Society Of Pennsylvania. p. 13.

40. Tatum, Penn's Great Town, p. 88.

41. Sidney George Fisher, A Philadelphia Perspective; The Diary of Sidney George Fisher, ed. by Nicholas B. Wainwright, (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), p. 409.

CHAPTER TWO
LANSDOWNE

William Birch, the chronicler of Philadelphia life and architecture, felt that the house built by John Penn, the Elder, on the west bank of the Schuylkill River, was spectacular enough to be included in his Country Seats of the United States (1805).⁸ (Fig. 7) Indeed it was. In 1796, the Vicomte de Noailles wrote: "It is a most superb place and supposed to be the best country house in America. It commands a noble view of the Schuylkill and seats of the neighborhood and at a distance, the steeples of some of the churches of Philadelphia."¹ The 200 acre estate was assembled by William Penn's grandson, John, on the west bank of the river, between Judge Peters's Belmont and Warner's Eaglesfield.² Later, the Centennial's Horticultural Hall would be erected on the site. Penn owned the parcel by December 6, 1773, and he quickly set about building a glorious house, a Palladian villa. This stone manse was to be different than anything previously built in Pennsylvania.³ It was a center hall plan with wings extending on either side. Each of these wings had an octagonal bay on the end for views of the river. These projecting bays were rare in America, but could be found in English pattern books

of the 1750s. (There are bays found at Monticello in 1773 and Harwood House in Annapolis in the mid-1770s, in addition to those at Lansdowne.⁴) The front entrance to the house was a pedimented portico that rose two stories, supported by pillars in the Ionic order, above Tuscan, doubly clustered at the corners. This portico rose from a truncated pyramid of steps. Kimball writes in Domestic Architecture that the portico was a device used on pretentious houses to give them more distinction, the vogue at the time being in very formal architecture. The portico was the extreme of academism. A hallmark of Palladio was the attached portico with superimposed orders. Palladio called for the principle story to be $1/6$ higher than any upper stories.⁵ Kimball writes concerning the "colossal double portico of columns rising the full height of the building" that is "is popularly thought of as specially characteristic of the Colonial house, prior to the Revolution."⁶ He adds that most are a result of later, post-war remodeling. The only original pre-war portico, according to Kimball, is the Roger Morris of Jumel House in New York City, built in 1765. (Fig. 8) However, it may be construed that the Lansdowne portico, part of the original plan, was started in 1773 and finished by 1777, thereby putting it just prior to the Revolution. There is no evidence that it was a later addition. The idea for a two story portico was not new. It was part of the works of Palladio, and can be seen in its nascent form at Chatsworth (1700-03). (Fig. 9) In America, the



Fig. 7 Lansdowne. Birch View, 1805
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Print Collection



Fig. 8 Roger Morris of Jumel House, New York City
From Kimball's Domestic Architecture, p. p. 102

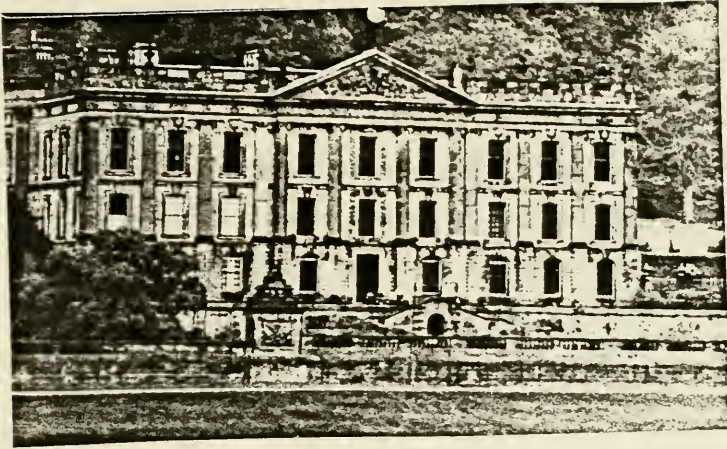


Fig. 9 Chatsworth, Derbyshire, England
Treasure houses of Britain 1986 Calendar

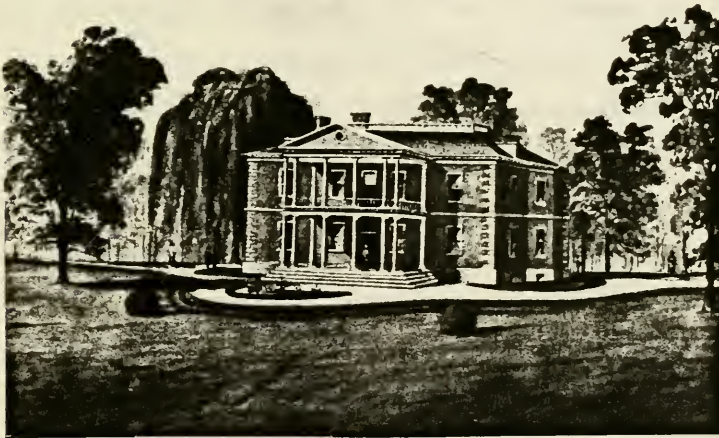


Fig. 10 Lansdowne D.J. Kennedy from a Birch Print
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Kennedy Collection.

mansion of Drayton Hall in Charleston in 1740 had a portico, as well as Shirley in Virginia in 1769. Jefferson toyed with the idea of a double portico in his 1772 designs for Monticello. In these drawings he makes each story the same height, ignoring Palladio's rules.⁷ The portico at Lansdowne had the added feature of a balustrade at the second story for an after dinner stroll. The roof of the house was hipped and topped with an observatory with railings, the truly functional use for a hipped roof.⁸ (Fig 10) These rooftop decks became universal in good houses of rectangular mass after 1750, as seen in Woodford and Mount Pleasant, near Philadelphia (fig. 11), not to mention other examples up and down the Eastern Seaboard.⁹ This was first seen in England during the Commonwealth at Coleshill, and in the colonies on the top of the McPhedris house in Portsmouth, before 1728. The rear of Lansdowne had a portico of only one story which was heavily pilastered and arched. The total design of the house was in the manner of Palladio, who, following Vitruvius, initiated the rational, classical house design. The plan conformed to the middle-Georgian, pre-Revolution idea of symmetry. There was a center, transverse hall, which would open into every room individually. This created a circle, or circuit, of rooms in which the guests could walk at a party. (Fig. 12)

The interior of Lansdowne would have been richly furnished. Peters, at Belmont, hired German plasterers to make ornaments for his ceilings, consisting of foliage



Fig. 11 Mount Pleasant, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia
from Kimball, Domestic Architecture, p. 65.

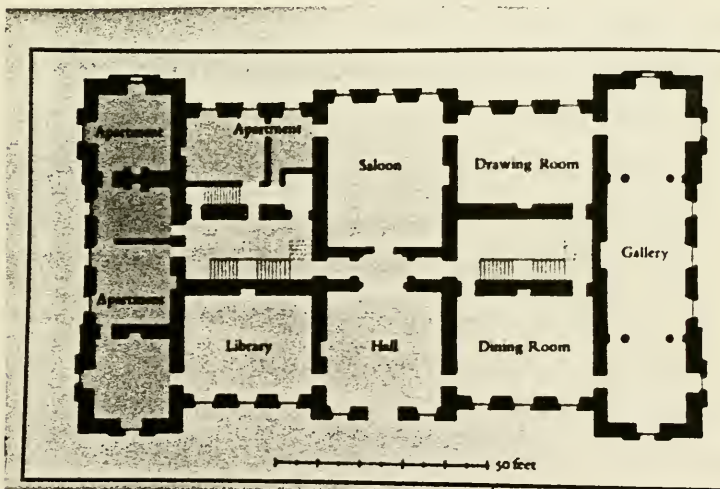


Fig. 12 Circuit of an 18th century house
Hagley Hall, Worcestershire, England.
From Girouard, Life in the English Country House, p.202

and festoons of fruit and flowers.¹⁰ Elaborate chimney pieces of marble were imported from England to grace the carefully proportioned rooms. Of the furnishings at Lansdowne, little is known or can only be surmised from the Bingham's tenure. This will be discussed later.

The setting of the house was as important as its design. John Adams wrote to his wife on June 23, 1795: "Went to Lansdowne on Sunday, about half a mile this side of Judge Peters' where you once dined. The place is very retired, but very beautiful - a splendid house, gravel walks, shrubbries and clumps of trees in the English style on the banks of the Schuylkill."¹¹ The house was approached through a gate, leading the visitor up a winding lane, through a park of statues and picturesque vistas, until the house came into magnificent view. In 1798, an iron gate was erected by William Bingham. The iron railing was designed by John Skidmore and Sons, Holborn, London, and Pearly Street, New York. The lodges that guarded the gate were designed by H.A. Keeble, Architects, 123 High Holborn, England. The panels of the railings were three feet apart and nine feet high. The lodges were 100 feet apart. In D.J. Kennedy's watercolor, the lodges suggest a closer placement, but show the general appearance of the gate.¹² (Fig, 13) A green house, boxwood gardens and a bath house were at the rear of the house, along with stables for the Bingham's imported thoroughbreds. The carpet of lawn swept down to the river in the English fashion, the villa sitting



Fig. 13 Lansdowne Gate. D.J. Kennedy
Historical Society, Kennedy Collection

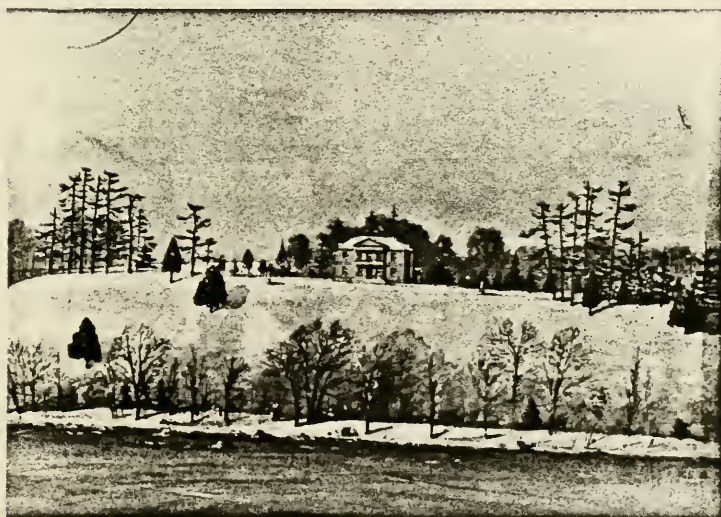


Fig. 14 Lansdowne in Winter showing sweep of lawn.
D.J. Kennedy
Historical Society of Philadelphia, Kennedy Collection

as a jewel in a beautiful setting. (Fig 14) Across the river, similar in style, is Mount Pleasant, built in 1763.¹³

Penn had finished the house by 1777 when it appeared as a stately house on the Faden Map of Philadelphia. (Fig. 15) Nicolas Scull's map of the same year, "That part of Pennsylvania now the principle seat of War" (fig 16), depicts Lansdowne with its pedimented portico. The house was known as Lansdowne from its erection in 1773 and was not named, as it was once believed, for the pro-American Secretary of State and close friend of Franklin, Lord Lansdowne. He was not Lord Lansdowne, but the Earl of Shelburne at the time.¹⁴

But what of the man who built the villa? John Penn's father was Richard, son of William by his second wife, Hannah Callowhill. It was John Penn's (called the Elder) cousin John who built Solitude. John, the Elder, came to Pennsylvania in 1753 as deputy governor for his grandfather's commonwealth, under James Hamilton, who was lieutenant governor. He returned to Britain in 1755, returning to Pennsylvania in 1763 to supercede another Richard Penn, who had been acting lieutenant governor. John was faced with a difficult term; patriots in Philadelphia and elsewhere were stirring up revolutionary fervor and Penn was a member of the ruling aristocratic class, therefore labeled as a Loyalist. It was during this turbulent period that John Penn began work on Lansdowne. It was in 1777, with the house complete, that the British



Fig. 15 Faden's Map of
Philadelphia
1777, Free
Library of
Philadelphia

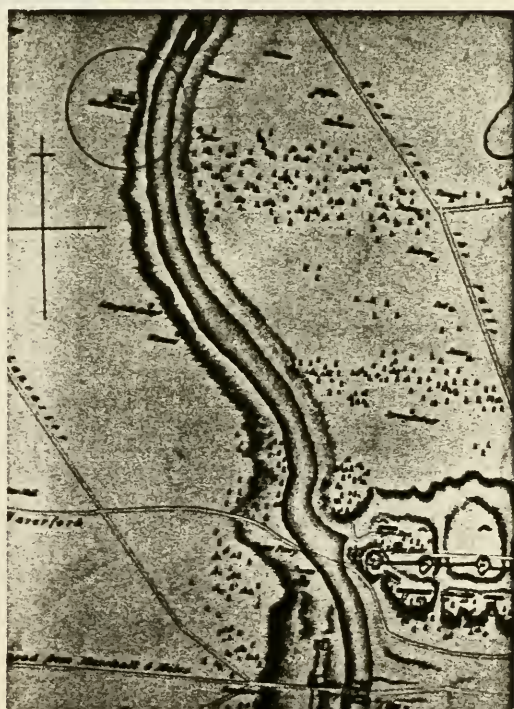


Fig. 16 Scull's Map of
Philadelphia
1777 Free Library
of Philadelphia

invaded the city, and Penn was sent, with other Tories, to New Jersey. After the war, he returned to Philadelphia and peacefully divided his time between his country seat, his city house at 44 Pine Street, between Second and Third, and trips abroad. He died on February 9, 1795, and was buried in Christ Church, until he made his final trip to England to be buried in Penn family land.

John Penn had married Ann, the daughter of Chief Justice William Allen, on May 31, 1766. Together they made Lansdowne the center of social life it would remain for many years. They rivaled the jovial Judge Peters with their parties. But all was not wine, roses and laughter. Class discontent and envy of the rich life at Lansdowne can be detected in a poem published in a Philadelphia newspaper:

Tho to thy mansion wits and fops repair
 To game, to feast, to flatter, and to stare
 But say, from what bright deeds dost thou derive
 That wealth which bids the rival British Clive?
 Wrung from the hardy sons of toil and war,
 By arts, which petty scoundrels would abhor.¹⁵

Fops and scoundrels may have been attracted to Lansdowne, but so were artists who came to sketch this finest of Philadelphia's country villas. In 1792, the young Englishman, James Pellicier Malcolm, came to the capital and painted the house, providing the only eighteenth century view known.¹⁶ (Fig 17) It shows the Palladian house crowning a lawn which stretches to the river. Interestingly, Malcolm's view omits the octagonal bays

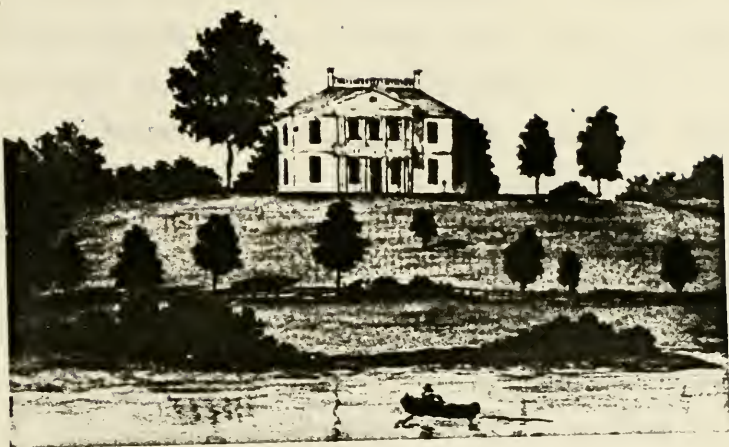


Fig. 17 Lansdowne Mansion James Peller Malcolm C. 1792
Private Collection.



Fig. 18 Lansdowne Mansion Robert Gilmore, Jr. 1797
In his Memorandums made in a Tour to the Eastern States in the Year 1797. Manuscript in the Boston Public Library. Reprinted in the Bulletin of the Boston Public Library, II (1892): 72.

at the ends of the wings. Five years later, Robert Gilmore of Baltimore, executed a pen drawing of the villa, this time including the bays. (Fig. 18) By the time Gilmore drew this picture, John Penn was dead.

In his will of January 2, 1794, John Penn left everything to Ann, "all tracts of Land with the Messuages and Appurtenances situate in Blockly Township in the County of Philadelphia, containing 200 acres or thereabouts called and generally known by the name of Lansdowne and which I purchased of Dr. William Smith, John Boucher, and Mahlon Hills and also another tract of land in the same Township, which I lately purchased from Widow Warner...."¹⁷

A month later, on March 9, 1795, after John Penn's death, Ann conveyed the property to James Greenleaf of New York, who was married to a niece of Penn's. Two years later, Greenleaf was in financial ruin with his partner, Robert Morris. The house and property were sold at Sheriff's Sale to one of the few large capitalists and land speculators who was not ruined in the 1797 financial crisis. True, William Bingham was hard pressed, but it says much of his financial situation that he was able to raise the \$24,505 mortgage to buy the property for \$31,050. He bought the "establishment"¹⁸ for his beautiful wife, Anne. He thought he had paid too much for the property just to please her.¹⁹ William Bingham was one of the richest men in America. He was a captain of the dragoons, a member of the Congress of Confederation and the state legislature, a Speaker of the House and

a U.S. Senator. He owned land west of Philadelphia and in Maine. (Binghamton, Maine is named for him.) (Fig. 19)

William Bingham graduated from the College of Pennsylvania in 1768 and set off to the West Indies to make his fortune. He returned to Philadelphia after the war and was entranced by the beautiful and accomplished, sixteen year old, eldest daughter of his business associate Thomas Willing. Anne - called Nancy by her family - was given a proper Philadelphia education; learning to speak intelligently in several languages, sing, play the harpsichord, read, dance, draw, and of course - the mark of a refined woman - write a good letter. Her cousin, Joshua Francis Fisher, described her. "She was not regularly beautiful, but had a combination of expression, grace and figure which made her the most attractive woman of her day. She was not witty, but bright, always at ease and extremely kind and courteous to all"²⁰ (Fig. 20) Rufus Griswold writes in his book, Republican Court (1855), after talking with people who knew Anne Willing Bingham: "Her style, her beauty, her influence, the elegance of her house, her taste and aristocratic distinction of her assemblages which frequently adorned it, have become as household words in the city which was the scene of them and indeed are historical in the annals of the higher social life in America...Sprightly, easy, winning, are terms which describe the manners of many women, but while truly describing hers they would describe them imperfectly,

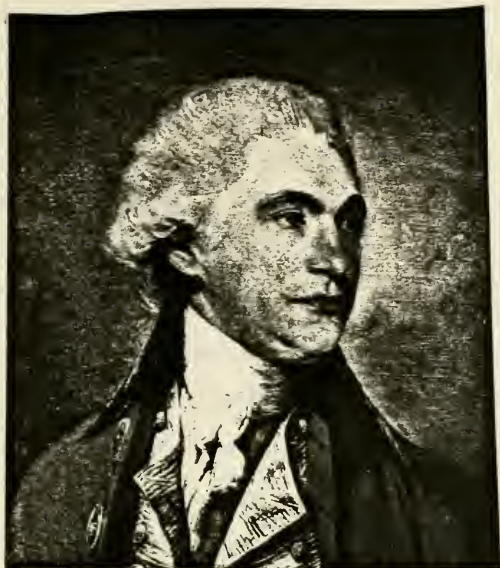


Fig. 19 William Bingham
Detail from a
painting
by
Gilbert
Stuart,
1795



Fig. 20 Anne (Nancy)
Willing Bingham
Sketch by Gilbert
Stuart.
Owned by Dr. Francis
Fisher Hart,
Ambler, Pa.
Published in
Alberts, Golden
Voyage

unless they gave the idea that they won all who knew her a special measure of personal interest and relation...."²¹

Anne and William were married on October 26, 1780, at Christ Church. "Speaking of handsome women, brings Nancy Willing to my mind," wrote Anna Rawle, "she might sit for the Queen of Beauty and is lately married to Bingham, who returned from the West Indies with an immense fortune. They have set out in highest style; nobody here will be able to make the figure they do; equipage, house, cloathes are all the newest taste - and yet some people wonder at the match. She is but sixteen and such a perfect form. His appearance is less amiable."²² William comes across as being very rich, but rather a boar, notwithstanding his beautiful wife.

William and Anne Bingham went to Europe after their marriage, where Anne won the favor of European aristocratic circles with her inner beauty. In 1784, Bingham wished to settle and returned to Philadelphia.²³ He built a house between Third and Fourth Streets, south of Willings Alley and north of Spruce Street. This became known as Mansion House. (Fig. 21) It was modeled after the Duke of Manchester's house on Manchester Square in London. (Fig. 22) Mansion House was completed in late 1786 or early 1787.

Anne Bingham decorated the house in the European style, selling all her old American furnishings.²⁴ It was here that she established herself as an arbiter of fashion. At her parties, the rich and famous mingled



Fig. 21 Mansion House, the Bingham's city house.
 William Birch engraving
 Taken from Alberts, Golden Voyage



Fig. 22 The Duke of Manchester's house, model for Mansion House
 This house in London is now the home of the Wallace
 Collection.

in a continental salon atmosphere. Samuel Breck, the young owner of Sweetbriar, wrote in his Recollections of a party at Mansion House: "...a millionaire who lived in the most showy style of any American. The forms at his house were not suited to our manners. I was often at his parties at which each guest was called aloud and taken up by a servant on the stairs, who passed it on to the man-in-waiting at the drawing room door. In this drawing room the furniture was superb Gobelin and the folding doors were covered with mirrors, which reflected the figures of the company, so as to deceive an untraveled countryman, who, having been paraded up the marble stairway amid echos of his name--oftimes made very ridiculous by the queer manner in which the servants pronounced it--would enter the brilliant apartment and salute the looking glasses instead of the master and mistress of the house and their guests."²⁵

Breck also wrote: "There was a luxury in the kitchen, table, parlour and street equipage of Mr. and Mrs. Morris that was to be found nowhere else in America. Bingham's was more gaudy, but less comfortable."²⁶

The owner of Sweetbriar was not the only one to find Bingham, his wife and their daughters, a bit too much for Philadelphia. They were often attacked in print and letter for the European fashions. Harrison Gray Otis wrote to his wife in Boston that he saw the second Bingham daughter, Maria, with her 35 year old mother. Otis observed them: "in a dress...you will hardly believe

it is possible for a lady to wear, at least at this season. A muslin robe and her Chemise and no other article of cloathing upon her body. I have been regaled with the sight of her whole leg for five minutes together, and do not know 'to what height' the fashion will be carried. The particulars of her dress I have from Mrs. F--, Who assures me that her chemise is fringed to look like a petticoat."²⁷ Abigail Adams said the Bingham women wore their dresses so low cut that they looked like "nursing mothers."²⁸ So much for the fashion of the wife of the richest man in America.

In 1789, Bingham leased Penn's Lansdowne and its 142 Acres. It was Pennsylvania's largest and most elaborate country villa. Bingham wrote to General Knox: "The buildings are excellent; the land good and the local situation of the place, very agreeable and commanding."²⁹ Penn was out of the country and Bingham heard in the spring of 1792 that Penn was planning to return to Philadelphia. He wrote to Penn: "It is natural to believe that you would be desirous of repossessing yourself of a country seat to which Mrs. Penn and yourself must be particularly attached... I never viewed myself as a tenant on any other conditions than an entire subservience to your interest and convenience. The moderate terms on which the lease was granted could imply no other species of arrangement. I therefore cheerfully resign the same with my best wishes for your long enjoyment of Lansdowne."³⁰ Bingham finally bought the property in 1797, two years

after Penn's death.

Anne, in her enjoyment of the social scene, went on an all night sleighing party soon after the birth of her son, William, in December of 1800. Although she was very frail, Anne insisted on neglecting none of her social activities. She caught a cold, which settled in her chest and sent her into a rapid decline. "Though her situation is by no means desperate, it is highly critical, so much so, as to leave the hopes and fears of those about her who understand her complaint nearly balanced."³¹ The cold was diagnosed as galloping consumption, tuberculosis, usually fatal. Her doctor ordered a sea voyage to a warmer climate. On Monday, April 13, 1801, the citizens of Philadelphia solemnly lined the streets to watch the beautiful Nancy Bingham be carried from Mansion House to the Willing Dock and put aboard a ship. A lead-lined coffin was below decks. En route to Madiera, her condition worsened and the course was changed to Bermuda. They landed on May 7; Anne was dead by the eleventh. She was 37. With Anne's death, William Bingham was a broken man. He moved to England, dying of a stroke in Bath, on May 6, 1804. He was 52.

Lansdowne, along with all the other Bingham holdings, were held in trust for William, Jr. This trust was remarkable in that the trustees were able to elect new ones when vacancies occurred, an unheard of condition. The first trustees were William's grandfather, Thomas Willing, and his brother-in-law, Alexander Baring. The contents

of Mansion House were sold at public vendue and the house became the Mansion House Hotel. It burned in 1847 and was torn down.

Anne and William Bingham had three children who went on to marry quite well. Anne Louisa, (fig. 23), was the eldest daughter. She married, on August 23 1793, the twenty-four-year-old Honorable Alexander Baring. He was the second son of Sir Francis Baring, a very wealthy London merchant and banker. Alexander became the First Lord Ashburton in 1835. The Duc de Richelieu said of the Baring enterprises: "There are six great powers in Europe: England, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia and the Baring Brothers."³² Alexander and Anne Louisa lived in the "Powell House" and "The Hut", a small cottage on the grounds of Lansdowne that William had built for them to stay when they were in America. Alexander died in 1848. His son, William Bingham Baring, was born in Philadelphia in 1799. He married Harriet Mary, the eldest daughter of the Sixth Earl of Sandwich.

A second daughter, Maria Matilda, was a handful. (Fig. 24) She eloped on April 11, 1799, with a Frenchman, who called himself the Count de Tilly. He was known as a seducer, and William had warned his daughter about him two days before she eloped. She did not listen and the family was distraught. The elopement became quite a scandal, second only to the then current XYZ Affair. "Mrs. Bingham is very ill, I understand, and I have heard that Mr. Bingham has lost his senses. I really



Fig 23 Anne Louisa
Bingham Baring
Miniature owned
by great-great
granddaughter.
Published in
Alberts, Golden
Voyage.



Fig. 24 Maria Mathilda Bingham de Tilly Baring, with her
Two oldest of five Baring Children. By Sir Thomas
Lawrence. Published in Alberts, Golden Voyage.

feel for them, as I should for anybody in their situation."³³ Some scoffed at the affair, saying it was what came of all that pride and money. The "count", for £5000 and £500 a year, was persuaded to give up all claims to Maria and left the country, eventually settling in Berlin. On July 17, 1800, Maria was granted her divorce by the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Yet Maria's image was enhanced, not hindered by this escapade. She appeared even more romantic in the eyes of the young men of Philadelphia. She married Henry Baring, brother of Alexander, in 1802. After his death, she married the Marquis de Blaisell. Henry and Maria's son, Henry Bingham Baring, married Augusta, the daughter of the Sixth Earl of Cardigan.

William, the only son of William and Anne Bingham, was married in Montreal in 1822 to Marie Charlotte Louise, daughter of the Honorable M.G.A.C. de Lotbeniere, who later became the Baroness de Vaudruel in her own right. Their daughters married into the French nobility.

Though these marriages, the Bingham of Lansdowne live on in the male lines of the Marquis of Bath and the Duke of Grafton.

While William Bingham, the Younger, owned the estate, the house was leased. Samuel Breck wrote in his diary on the 20th of April, 1816: "Yesterday, as we were going to Belmont, my neighbor, Farmer Bones, informed me that the ex-king of Spain, Joseph Bonaparte, had hired Lansdowne House for one year -- that he had been in his company in the morning and found him a very plain, agreeable

man."³⁴ The next day, he again wrote: "Farmer Bones, who keeps the key of Lansdowne House, had another opportunity of seeing Joseph today."³⁵ Joseph Bonaparte, the elder brother of Napoleon, had indeed rented the house for a year, in 1816.

Joseph was the oldest son of Carlo and Maria Letizia Buonaparte, and was born in 1768. He and his younger brother, Napoleon, left their rough Corsican island and headed for France. Joseph was destined for a career in the church, Napoleon for military school. Both went with royal bursaries. But Joseph really wanted to enter the artillery. After the death of his father, he went to Pisa to read law while his younger brother started his military career. As Napoleon grew in power, his gentle brother was placed in prominent positions in diplomatic circles. He became the Ambassador to the Court of Parma and then to Rome. In 1800, he concluded a treaty at Mortfontaine between the United States and France, which ended the undeclared naval war. In 1802, he was a representative for France at the Congress of Aimeins, where, with Cornwallis as the English representative, hostilities between France and England were temporarily ended. In 1806, Napoleon made his brother the King of Naples. Two years later, he was proclaimed the King of Spain and the Indies. Napoleon did this as an effort to dethrone the Spanish Bourbons. But Joseph had his hands full in Spain. The Spanish obviously were not thrilled to have a new king foisted upon them. Resentment

and fury burned deeply within the Spanish populace. To add to Joseph Bonaparte's difficulties, a British Army was sent against him, under the capable command of the Duke of Wellington, a name for the Bonapartes to remember. The Duke defeated Joseph Bonaparte and his army at the battle of Vittoria on June 21, 1813, which compelled Joseph to flee the country for his own safety. During the campaigns of 1814, Napoleon made Joseph the Lieutenant General of the Regency to help the Empress Regent, Maria Louisa, cope with the complexities of government without the Little Emperor close by. During the Hundred Days, Joseph returned from Switzerland and helped finance his brother's campaigns. After the defeat at the hand of Wellington at Waterloo in 1815, Joseph fled to Rochefort with his brother, where the Emperor tried to persuade him to go to America. Napoleon purposed that the two brothers, since they looked similar, switch passports, so there would be less likelihood of Napoleon being captured. This plan was soon abandoned and Napoleon decided to throw himself on the mercy of the British. Joseph, under the name of M. Bouchard, left for the United States on the American ship, Commerce. The ship sailed for New York, and was harried on the way by British cruisers, but Joseph landed in port on the 27/28 of August (sources differ). Everyone in New York thought that this Frenchman was General Carnot, but once he was recognized by some of Napoleon's old soldiers, he admitted his true identity- Joseph Bonaparte, whom the press had always

said was lazy, stupid and inept.

Joseph lived for a time in a mansion overlooking the Hudson (now said to be called the Claremont Inn). Joseph made his way to Philadelphia, the most cosmopolitan city in America, and took up residence at 260 South Ninth Street. In 1816, he moved to Lansdowne, which had been previously tenanted by Edmond Randolph, Attorney General of the United States.³⁶ In a lawn fete of 1817, Joseph gave his greatest and possibly his only state entertainment in Pennsylvania. All the leading citizens of Philadelphia and the surrounding area were there, as the former king held court on the lawn at Lansdowne. (Fig. 25) Everyone marveled at how he resembled an English gentleman farmer in front of his villa.

Sidney George Fisher recalled in his diary on October 18, 1838, the appearance and manner of Joseph Bonaparte, ex-king of Spain. The "likeness to Napoleon is striking, particularly the profile shape of the head, jaw, nose, mouth, chin and figure, very much like the busts and pictures. The eye and expression showed that not this, but another body now returned to dust, held the soul which had governed the world. He is very simple and plain in dress and manners."³⁷ Joseph did closely resemble his brother, although he was taller and less stout than the Emperor. He had a smooth, fair complexion, which all the Bonapartes were known for. Also like all of the Bonaparte men, he had a fondness for the company of women.



Fig. 25 Joseph Bonaparte at Lansdowne. Painting By
Alice Barber Stephens
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Campbell Collection



Fig. 26 Lansdowne in Ruins. Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Print Collection, Penn residences

Joseph was married to a Mlle. Julie Clary. Her family was suspected of counter-revolutionary activities, especially her father, who was a soap boiler. Joseph Bonaparte stepped in gallantly and insured that everyone remained safe. Julie was short, horse-faced and afflicted with pimples,³⁸ but she was a kind-hearted girl, who was extremely intelligent and the possessor of an inheritance of 80,000 francs, enough to overcome initial courtship difficulties. Julie did not come to America with her husband, due to ill health; she spent the rest of her days in Florence, Italy. Their two daughters, Zenaide and Charlotte, did come to their father in America and lived with him on the estate he built near Bordentown. Here, he was known as the Count of Surilliers, the name of a village on his estate in France. In America, or anywhere, the Bonapartes were not likely to lack feminine companionship. It was their practice to have a mistress in everyplace where they spent any amount of time. Philadelphia was no exception. Joseph took for his American mistress a Quaker girl named Annette Savage. She bore him a daughter.³⁹

After its last illustrious tenant, Lansdowne remained unoccupied for years, in the care of the person who lived in The Hut. On July 4, 1854, it was accidentally set on fire by boys playing with "double-headed Dutchmen" firecrackers. The patrons of the nearby Blue Bell Tavern tried to extinguish the blaze, but were unsuccessful. The ruins (fig. 26) remained until late 1866. The Baring

family were resolved to rid themselves of the pile of rubble that once was the splendor of Lansdowne. The Barings stipulated that the land was not to be speculated upon, but put to the public use. A group of Philadelphia gentlemen heard that the property was for sale and purchased the 140 acre estate for \$84,953 with the intent of creating a public park. The property was ceded to the City and joined the Water Works, Laurel Hill and Sedgley as an addition to Fairmount Park. For a time, the great iron gates at 48th and Parkside remained as a testimonial to the greatness that once stood beyond. However, these gates were broken up and taken away when the area was dug up for clay for a brick kiln, thus erasing the last vestiges of the magnificent house of John Penn, called Lansdowne.

1. Robert C. Alberts, The Golden Voyage, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 309-310.

2. Eaglesfield is sometimes seen as "Egglesfield".

3. Thompson Wescott, The Historic Mansions and Building of Philadelphia, with some Notice of Their Owners and Occupants, (Philadelphia: Walter H. Barr, 1895), p. 333.

4. Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), Reprint of the 1922 edition. p. 81.

5. Gene Waddel, "The First Monticello", Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol XLVI, no. 11, (March 1987), p. 16.

6. Kimball, Domestic Architecture, p. 100.

7. Waddel, "The First Monticello". p. 16.

8. Kimball, Domestic Architecture, p. 89.

9. Ibid, p. 88.

10. John Cornforth, "Fairmount Park, -Philadelphia-I", Country Life, Vol. CLIII, no. 3941, (January 4, 1973), p. 21.

11. Wescott, The Historic Mansions..., p. 347.

12. Caption on the watercolor of the Lansdowne gates by D.J. Kennedy. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

13. Sandra L. Tatum and Roger W. Moss, Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, (Boston: G.K. Hall and Company, 1985), p. 568-569.

14. John Cornforth, "Fairmount Park, Philadelphia-II", Country Life, Vol. CLIII, no. 3943, (January 18, 1973), p. 151.

15. E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1979), p. 180.

16. Martin P. Snyder, City of Independence, (New York and London: Praeger Publishing, 1985), p. 169.

17. John Penn's Will, January 2, 1795, No. 1795-136. Wills and Inventories Archives, Basement, City Hall Annex.

18. Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 320.

19. Ibid, p. 320.
20. Samuel Breck, Recollections p. 200, 202, as quoted in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 214.
21. Rufus Griswold, Republican Court, (1855), p. 253-54, as quoted in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 501-02.
22. Letter from Anna Rawle to Mrs. Samuel Shoemaker, November 4, 1780. Quoted in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 97.
23. William Bingham to Thomas Willing, December 10, 1784: "Having now spent the greatest portion of my latter years in an unsettled situation in foreign countries, and having fully indulged the spirit of curiosity, I am determined to find 'rest for the sole of my foot' and to confine my future residence to my native place." Quoted in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 157.
24. A listing of the belongings sold at the public vendue of Mansion House in November of 1805 can be found in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 467-473.
25. Samuel Breck, Recollections, (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1877), p. 201-202.
26. Ibid, p. 203.
27. Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 379.
28. Joseph J. Kelley, Jr., Life and Times in Colonial Philadelphia, (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1973), p. 79.
29. William Bingham to General Knox, April 23, 1797. Quoted in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 222.
30. William Bingham Letter Books at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, p. 219, January 19, 1792. Quoted in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 505.
31. Alexander Baring to Francis Baring, March 29, 1801, quoted in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 411.
32. Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 433.
33. Letter from Mrs. Benjamin Stoddart to her niece, April 15, 1799, quoted in Alberts, The Golden Voyage, p. 369.
34. Breck, Recollections, p. 248.
35. Ibid, p. 248.
36. Clarence Edward Macartney and Gordon Dorrance, The Bonapartes in America, (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Co., 1939), p. 85.

37. Sidney George Fisher, The Diary of S.G.F., ed. by Nicholas B. Wainwright, (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967). October 18, 1838.

38. Desmond Seward, Napoleon's Family, (New York: Viking Press, 1986), p. 19.

39. Macartney, The Bonapartes in America, p. 98.

CHAPTER THREE

SEDGLEY

On the southeast side of the Schuylkill River, just to the south of the Girard Avenue Bridge, there is a bluff overlooking the river. On this hill, stood the house built by William Crammond. Called Sedgley, it has become well known in architectural history because it was designed by the architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, and said to be the first Gothic Revival house in the United States. It came from the mind and pen of the man who became known as a leading proponent of the Greek Revival, influencing a generation of professional architects. However, as straightforward as Sedgley seems, underneath it is an enigma. The information regarding this Schuylkill villa is, at best, confusing. For a time during research, it was even thought that the house was designed, but never built. This idea has been repudiated, but the house still guards its mysteries.

The land on which Sedgley was to be built was acquired on March 28, 1799, by a Philadelphia merchant, William Crammond. There is not much information on Crammond, a man whose business interests seemed to be in rolling mills. The property was previously owned by Robert Morris, along with his Lemon Hill land to the south. The land

was seized when Morris went bankrupt and was sold by Sheriff Penrose in 1799. Crammond bought 28 acres of this plot. In 1850, Thompson Wescott described the site: "The natural advantages of Sedgley Park are not frequently equalled, even upon the banks of the Romantic Schuylkill. From the height upon which the mansion is erected, it commands an interesting and extensive view. The scenery around is of unusual beauty. The country is covered in every direction with gentle hills and these are frequently crowned with neat country seats. The river, after winding in its fanciful and rugged path between mountains and beneath precipices, here assumes the nature of everything around, and flows silently beneath, while the busy passage of the canal boats on the opposite banks gives an agreeable variety to the scene."¹ (Fig. 27)

In 1799, after Crammond had purchased his river land, he hired Benjamin Henry Latrobe to make the designs for a country seat. In retrospect, Latrobe was one of this country's foremost architects. At the time, however, he was a thirty-five-year-old perfectionist.

Latrobe was born in 1764 in Yorkshire, England. He was European trained in the profession of architecture. His early plans were simple three bay by three bay square houses with a central rotunda. He greatly admired the clean lines of the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. In 1795, after the death of his wife, Latrobe set sail for the new American republic. He landed in Norfolk, Virginia and in 1798 or soon thereafter, he came to

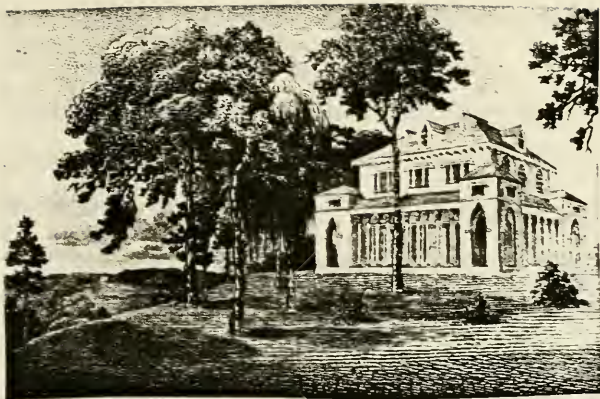


Fig. 27 Sedgley, A Birch View (No date with print)
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Print Collection



Fig. 28 Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, England.
Treasure Houses of Britain 1986 Calendar

Philadelphia. He was a capable architect, conversant in many styles. Crammond hired him the year after he arrived in Philadelphia.

Latrobe should be considered a product of the late eighteenth century English fashion -- a man completely aware of the continuing English architectural scene, who drew on its material for his work.² What Latrobe designed for Crammond closely followed current architectural developments. His square mass with four corner pavilions harked back to the Elizabethan mansions like Hardwick Hall, in Derbyshire. (Fig 28) Before the English Renaissance, this shape, the playing with geometric forms, was what the Elizabethans thought the medieval house, complete with towers, would look like.³ Already the Middle Ages had taken on a romantic aura. What Latrobe designed (fig. 29) was a combination of the tradition, as seen in England and France at the time. Latrobe's design of the new "Gothick" was an old house form with the pointed arches and drip moldings, still retaining the Federal characteristics of a hipped roof and round central bay.

This Gothic was that of William Kent, whose style by 1736, was known as "modern Gothick". It was extremely popular, very delicate and whimsical. This style was a free adaptation of the classical forms, which created an equivalent of Gothic, not an imitation.⁴ With the building of Strawberry Hill, the innovation of deliberate irregularity was born. The message at Strawberry Hill was "the modern Gothic building must seek its authority



Fig. 29 Benjamin Henry Latrobe's design for William Crammond of Sedgley. 1799 Watercolor at the Fairmount Park Commission.

not merely in the taste of this or that architect, but in the monuments of the Middle Ages themselves."⁵

This "Gothick" is not to be confused with the Gothic Revival of the nineteenth century, that of A.W. Pugin and Charles Barry, which was a response to a variety of factors, including the Oxford Movement, increasing industrialization and a desire for simplicity. This latter revival, aided by scholarship, sought authenticity in the quest for a national style.

In plan, the new Republic houses were becoming more specialized in the use of rooms than the Colonial houses. An example of this can be seen in the President's House, in Washington, D.C. Thomas Jefferson sent a memo concerning its rooms in 1792. The list of rooms is as follows: "Antechamber area, audience room, Parlours - 4, Dining rooms - 2, Study, Library, clerk rooms - 2, bedrooms with antechambers and dressing rooms - 4, Bedrooms, single-6, servants rooms, kitchen, staff rooms and cellars."⁶ Granted, this is a very important house, but it gives an idea of the number and variety of rooms found in fine homes. Sleeping accommodations in these houses were becoming more refined. Most important chambers would have a separate alcove for the bed or a separate dressing room, a feature which Kimball says was unknown prior to the Revolution but occurred in English pattern books towards the end of the century.⁷ Latrobe saw this idea, perhaps at Hamilton's Woodlands (1788), and included it at Sedgley.

All did not go well between client Crammond and architect Latrobe. In a series of letters written to William Waln, Latrobe reflected on his treatment at Crammond's hand. On April 1, 1805, he stated that the design and subsequent execution of a project can not be separated: "...specially in the erection of William Crammond's house on the Schuylkill. I have been disgraced both by the deformity[?] and expense of some parts of the building because after giving the first general designs, I had nothing further concern with it."⁸ Two years later, Latrobe once again complained of his treatment: "... it is very evident from what I have suffered in the case of Mr. Crammond's house. I gave Mr. Crammond a design at his request, for a mansion and a tenant's house. He adapted the latter plan and had the former under consideration. No estimate of either was made... On visiting the work, I found the journeymen employed in making sashes for the tenant's house [known as Sedgley guard house] quite as expensive as they could have possibly contrived for the best house in Philadelphia... The consequence was that I left him the plans and have never been nearer to the house since... And yet, as Crammond stated its expense at \$40,000, I should have been ruined and starved by the consequence of giving Mr. Crammond a design had I depended on that kind of Business... I could prove in a court of justice that in consequence of the public opinion that the house of Crammond cost such an enormous sum, by my extravagant mode of building, I have lost

very much lucrative business."⁹

Latrobe took indignant leave of William Crammond and had sour feelings about the whole business from then on. But the watercolor which Latrobe had prepared did belong to Crammond; he left it for Crammond to do with what he wished. And what Crammond eventually built closely resembled Latrobe's design. The front and rear facades had porticos of eight columns each, both flanked by an arcade with a tower at each end. These corner pavilions were features favored by Latrobe. They gave the house its Elizabethan plan. The north and south ends had bays of two stories. The roof was hipped and contained garrets.¹⁰ The Gothic character is superficially achieved with pointed arches and drip moldings.

If one compares the Latrobe drawing with a later engraving by Childs, of 1828 (fig. 30), differences can be noted, which perhaps give an indication of the changes Crammond undertook without Latrobe. The north and south upper windows are pointed arches, where Latrobe designed tripartate windows with Ionic columns separating each section. In Childs's view, each pavilion seems to be open to the air. Latrobe's had pointed arches, the upper half glass, the lower half masonry infill.

As stated, the footprint of the building should be fairly distinctive, a central block with four corner pavilions. One of the oddities of this story is that an "L" shaped building, not conforming to the 75 feet

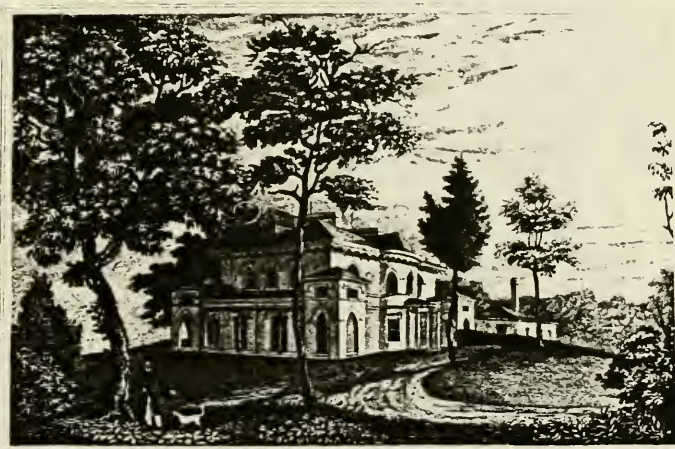


Fig. 30 Comparison of Latrobe's Design of Sedgley 1799 and The Childs print of 1828 found in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania Print Collection

by 75 feet dimensions of Sedgley, appears on a 1844 map found in a Brief of Title. (Fig. 31) Why does the proper footprint not appear, unless the building is already gone by this time? A map of 1822 (fig. 32) by Peter C. Varle, shows a house - attributed to Mr. Crammond - on the east side of the river, above Mr. Pratt's Lemon Hill. This is the earliest map where the Crammond estate is listed. This is a strike against the theory that the house as not built.

By 1806, Crammond was in great financial difficulty. He and Philip Nicklin are listed as co-defendants against the Bank of the United States.¹¹ On September 11 of that year, the estate was sold by the Sheriff to Samuel Mifflin for \$7,300. Not much is known about Mifflin, except that he too was a merchant. He lived at Sedgley for six years. In 1812, the property was sold to James Cowles Fisher for \$15,000. In this deed, there is a mention of a messuage on the property and six lots.

If there is any question to whether the house was ever built, it is put to rest during this period. There was a certain Royal Navy officer by the name of Joshua Rowley Watson. His uncle resided at Eaglesfield, the country villa directly across the river from Sedgley. In a series of journal entries in the summer of 1816, Watson related his impressions of the mansion across the Schuylkill. (Fig. 33)

On June 29, Watson made his first trip to Sedgley.



Sedgley. Seat of James C. Fisher Esq.

Fig. 33 Sedgley, seat of J.C. Fisher
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Print Collection

"I returned the call of Mr. Fisher, whoses Country House is directly opposite to Eaglesfield. It is built in the Modern Gothic Style of Cottages.¹² A Villa would be more appropriate for the buildings of this sort. The views from it are confined and the trees allowed to grow too near the house. The interior arrangements are good and the Bedrooms have each a Dressing closet adjoining. There is a piazza on two sides. It was built by a Mr. Crammond who laid out on it \$59,000. Mr. Fisher gave only \$15,000."¹³

On July 10, another trip was taken to Sedgley, and Watson once again recorded his reaction. "We rode over to Sedgley, James Fisher, Esq^r. It is directly opposite Eaglesfield on the Schuylkill, pleasantly situated and built after the modern gothic. The Grounds are confined, its view up the river is interesting."¹⁴

Finally, his last entry concerning Sedgley is on the fifteenth of July 1816. "The day was cloudy and unpleasant. I made some sketches of the house. [Eaglesfield] We dined at Sedgley, J. Fisher, Esq^r. It is opposite Eaglesfield on the et. side of the Schuylkill and built after the plan of a Frenchman. It is well contrived, tho I can't say so much of the arrangements of the grounds. The trees are too much trimmed up and too many of them near the house."¹⁵ With his artist's eye, Watson was obviously quite disturbed by the landscaping. On October 28, 1816, Watson made a watercolor of Sedgley from the banks of Eaglesfield.¹⁶ It does seem to show the house at a disadvantage due to its landscaping. In visiting the site today, it

is easy to see this. The site is on the edge of a cliff down to the river. Any trees that were desired on the river side had to be planted close to the house, or else down the hill. However, another point of view is expressed in the Casket (June 1829). "In arrangement of the ground, the proprietor has been particularly happy. The park exhibits the marks of cultivation and taste, and the mansion is beautifully shaded with the native and luxuriant forest trees of the country."¹⁷ Who is to be believed as to the true beauty of Sedgley's landscaping? Tastes vary and change with different viewers.

Typical of Philadelphians, Fisher used the house as a summer home. He lived in town on the north side of Chestnut Street, below Ninth, in a house that had a garden facing Jayne Street. On February 1, 1836, James C. Fisher sold the property to Isaac Loyd for \$70,000. Loyd was a land speculator who bought part of Lemon Hill in addition to the Sedgley tract. Loyd went into a complicated arrangement with Samuel Downer, Jr., a New York merchant. Loyd sold the land to Downer and Downer transferred it back to Loyd in payment of ground rents. The land was divided into lots and Loyd paid anywhere from \$300 to \$900, on thirty-three plots of ground. Loyd seems to have lost his money in the financial panic of 1837. Ten years later, Samuel Downer's sons, Frederick W. and Samuel R., sued Loyd for the arrearages of ground rent. Judgment was for the Downers on May 10, 1847, and on June 19,

the property was sold to the Downer's in a sheriff's sale for \$7,800. Downer was living in another city and was financially strapped due to depressed times; in 1851, he sold the property to Ferdinand Dreer, a jeweler, for \$26,750. This purchases included the Sedgley and Mount Sidney tracts.¹⁸ Unfortunately, these titles never mention the mansion house of Sedgley.

The final chapter in the life of Sedgely came in 1857, when Dreer sold the property to a consortium¹⁹, that bought the property in trust for a public park. These men intended to sell it to the city, but the City could not raise the funds. Therefore, in a deal with the City of Philadelphia the consortium promised to find subscribers for \$60,000 of the \$125,000 purchase price. According to a Park publication concerning Sedgley: "the value of property in money and to its yet greater value as a Park" was incalculable, as a "security for the purity of the Schuylkill waters to the city of Philadelphia."²⁰ Some people felt that Dreer and others conspired to cheat the City by lending their names to a nonexistent subscription list, thereby inflating the price. Others said the property was worth double what Dreer took for it. Whether the price was too high or too low, John Bonsall, of John Bonsall and Company, a conveyancer, wrote on October 23, 1857: "it would be perfect madness to attempt to destroy it [Sedgley Park] and we think no gentleman would entertain such a thought, who had given the matter any serious consideration."²¹ So Sedgley was conveyed to



Fig. 34 B.R. Evans watercolor of Sedgley, no date.
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Print Collection

the City of Philadelphia in 1857. Together with Lemon Hill and other Park properties, the total acreage was brought to 110½, all to insure the purity of Philadelphia's water supply. Strangely, in all the transactions concerning the gift of Sedgley to the City, a house is never mentioned. Perhaps it was torn down previous to 1857. B.R. Evans in his watercolor of Sedgley, (fig. 34) notes that "it burned some years ago". This researcher could find no evidence of the City demolishing the house.

All that remains of Sedgley is a flat bluff, bounded by the Girard Avenue Bridge and Sedgley Drive. The river is far below, down a once steep incline. The park built a little drive, with a circle at the terminus, on the flat top of the hill. The "guard house" still stand, so one could visualize the entry drive through the trees to the front portico. The house faced the river which is now obliterated from sight by trees. It seems that the house would have been sited precipitously on three sides with a sloping entrance drive, unless much of the land on the top of the hill was eroded or cut away for the building of the bridge or Sedgley Drive. It takes a great imagination to visualize the site as it must have been. However, the sight line back the drive to the city is spectacular. Perhaps the church steeples could have been seen, and the sound of their bells heard floating on the summer air by the people sitting on the piazza at Sedgley. (Figs. 35 - 39)

1. Thompson Wescott, The Historic Mansions and Buildings of Philadelphia, (Philadelphia: Walter H. Barr, 1895), p.449.
2. Sterling Boyd, The Adams Style in America, 1770-1820, (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1985), p. 219.
3. Discussion with Dr. David Brownlee, Architectural Historian, University of Pennsylvania, February 11, 1987.
4. John Summerson, Architecture in Britain, (London: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 240.
5. Ibid, p. 243.
6. District of Columbia Papers, Department of State, Vol 6, part 2, no. 158. Quoted in Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966, reprint of 1922 edition), p. 153-4.
7. Kimball, Domestic Architecture, p. 155.
8. Letter from Benjamin Henry Latrobe to William Waln, April 1, 1805. American Philosophical Society.
9. Letter from Benjamin Henry Latrobe to William Waln, January 22, 1807, American Philosophical Society.
10. Wescott, The Historic Mansions..., p. 450.
11. Brief of Title, 1857. Fairmount Park Commission.
12. Here Watson may be referring to the cottage orne.
13. Joshua Rowley Watson, Diary, unpublished, Library Company of Philadelphia, June 29, 1816.
14. Ibid, July 10, 1816.
15. Ibid, July 15, 1816.
16. This watercolor was not available for reproduction. It is in the private collection of the Bara Foundation.
17. Casket, June 1829. In the Campbell Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
18. Mount Sidney was a lot of land located to the north-east of Sedgley.
19. Henry Cope, Joseph Harrison, Thomas Ridgeway, Nathaniel Browne, George Biddle.

20. Special Report of the Committee on City Property Relative to Sedgley Park, 1857, October 15, 1857, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, p. 3.

21. Ibid, p. 11.

CONCLUSION

22. Arnest, Chamounix, Greenland, Hatfield House, Lilacs, Lemon Hill, Ormiston, Ridgeland, Rockland, Solitude, Strawberry Mansion, Sweetbriar.

APPENDIX

The following is a partial list of some other mansions that once stood in what is now Fairmount Park. Much of this information comes from Sidney M. Earle's Fairmount Park: The Parkway - The Wissahickon and Some of its Past up to 1950, found at the Free Library.

BELLEVUE was a small estate, originally owned by the Coxe family, east of Rockland, on the northwest side of Edgley Lane. Later, it was owned by the Wharton family. Sidney George Fisher went to Bellevue to visit his cousin, Deborah Wharton, and her daughter, Annie. He recorded on September 3, 1863, that Bellevue was "an old place, surrounded by fine trees, on a lane leading to the Ridge Road, near Mr. Robert Ralston and the Church of St. James the Less."¹ Deborah Fisher and William Wharton had 10 children, including Joseph, for whom the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania is named. Bellevue was a pre-Revolutionary house which Charles Wharton purchased in 1796. The house was removed by the Park Commission.

BLOCKLEY was the estate of the Warner family. William Warner came to America in 1677-78 and purchased the land from the Indians of the area. This meant he was

holding land before William Penn arrived in the 1680s. Penn confirmed his holdings in 1701-02. The property stretched from the river and beyond Lancaster Avenue, halfway to Cobb's Creek, and south to Haverford Avenue. This was the first house erected on the west bank of the River. The 132 acres came to Robert Egglesfield Griffith in 1798. The estate of Eaglesfield was adjacent. Presently, the Zoological Gardens and Sweetbriar and the site of Horticultural Hall [Lansdowne] cover the Blockley land.

BRUNNENWALD was an old-fashioned house on the crest of Cedar Hill. It was the house of the Ott family. A Lieutenant Peter Ott fought in the Revolutionary War. The house was a farmhouse type with a broad porch which gave sweeping views of the Greenland Farm and the Schuylkill River. It is thought that the Park acquired the property in 1898.

BUSH HILL was known as the "Old Hamilton Place". This house became important during the yellow fever epidemics of 1793. It was converted into a plague hospital, presided over by Dr. Physick. This is where some victims of the yellow fever were brought to be tended by those still alive. Many did not survive.

BUTTERCUP MANSION was located at the end of Buttercup Lane, formerly the Cresheim Road. It was a large buff-colored mansion, which, in 1887, became a vacation home for the working girls of Philadelphia.

EDGLEY extended from what became Edgley Lane, up to the boundry of Strawberry Hill, and from the River to Ridge Avenue. In 1682, the land was owned by Dennis Rockford, who had come to America with William Penn. He recorded the birth of his daughter in the house at the bend of the river. In 1693, the 200 acres passed th Mary Rockford, Dennis's widow. In 1707, it was sold to Thomas Shute, passing to Abel James, and the to James Shute, son of Thomas. Joseph was the man who laid out the 43 foot lane called Edgley which ran to the river. In 1760, 76 acres were bought by Joshua Howell. He kept 45 acres for himself and gave 31 acres to his brother-in-law, Francis Rawle. Howell used this as his country seat, calling the house Edgley. The house was torn down in 1871.

EAGLESFIELD or EGGLESFIELD was a house that was torn down in 1870 after the Park acquired it. It was part of the 132 acres acquired by Robert Egglesfield Griffith in 1798. He lived in a house north of the western approach to the Girard Avenue Bridge. The house was very elegant, with fine pavilions, dairies, stables and other necessary amenities. An extensive lawn swept eastward. Other sources

attribute the house to John Penn, nephew of John Penn, the Elder, or to James Greenleaf, the partner of Robert Morris.² The house passed into the Warner family in 1794, staying in the family until Griffith bought it and gave it its name. After passing to Richard Rundle, a gentleman, the merchant John J. Borie bought it. Fisher wrote in his diary on March 16, 1840: "Went up to the house Eaglesfield, Borie's old place, one of the beautiful seats on the now deserted Schuylkill. The house was open and I went in, as no one was living there. It is a very handsome and convenient mansion, of a plan that I like very much and very well finished. The situation is fine, commanding a view up and down the river. It is surrounded by fine old trees. It is to be occupied this summer by a tenant."³

FAIRY HILL was a house owned by George Pepper and then Joseph Sims. Fisher, on January 29, 1839, was very impressed with the mansion. It was finely situated and had many fine conifers which produced an excellent effect in winter and increased its beauty. Fisher liked the way the gates and palings were painted with coal tar, which made them look like black iron. He was going to do the same thing at his house.⁴

FOUNTAIN GREEN was a tract of land owned by John Mifflin of the Cliffs. It was separated from his estate by a small valley and a stream. Fountain Green was one of the oldest estates in the park, established in the 1680s. The tract passed to Samuel Mifflin, then to John Mifflin, Jr., the great-grandson of the first Mifflin to settle here. The house was built sometime after the Revolution. It was not elegant in style, but was comfortable and pleasantly situated. The property passed out of the Mifflin family. In 1849, the area was known as the Eagle and Wolf Farm, with a wharf on the river and the house used for picnickers. It was very popular with the German population of the City. In 1854, the land was speculated upon, but the park acquired the property. The mansion was torn down in 1871. The Smith Playhouse was built on the site of the mansion.

THE GROVE was a plantation located next to Blockley, and was owned by John Warner, son of William. The house was built around 1700. It was a dormered mansion of spacious proportions. Warner lived in the house as a landed gentleman. The house was torn down in 1799, and the timbers were used to build Heston, by the grandson of John Warner. The Zoo, Sweetbriar and the Lansdowne site cover the land of Warner's.

HARLEIGH was the home of Francis Rawle and was north of the dell that was next to Somerton.

HERITAGE was the home of Evan Prowattain, who purchased the land from a hermit. On the site was the Tabernacle of the Mystic Brotherhood. After 1848, the mansion disappeared.

HESTON See THE GROVE

LESLIE was a small mansion immediately south of Sedgley. It was built in 1802 on land sold off of Pratt's Gardens and extending east to the canal boundry. There were twenty-nine acres in the plot and Leslie was on a four acre lot.

MAY PLEASANT was along the Wissahickon Road, where Nicetown Lane crossed it. It was an old house of the patriot Tench Francis. The mansion was built of mixed colored bricks with a front porch on each side, with hexagonal bays. The British burned it, despite the guard set by Washington on the Wissahickon Road between May Pleasant and the "Robin Hood Inn".

RIVERSIDE was a house built by Peter Robeson after the death of his brother Jonathan prior to the 1800s. Peter had bought Jonathan's share of the estate and built his mansion, which he called Milverton. It was located in the north bank of the Wissahickon, near the River.

In 1800, he gave it to his son, Andrew, as a wedding present. About 1850, the mansion became a hostelry and the grounds had a steamboat building erected on them. The property was known as Riverside Mansion Grounds. Steamboats were chartered by the government during the Civil War to transport troops to and from camps in the estate area and the city. In 1875, the mansion became the Centennial Hotel; it later resumed its name of Riverside.

ROBESON was a mansion built at the fifth milestone of the Ridge Pike. James Robeson, who owned Robeson Mill, remodeled Robeson Mansion and lived there until 1872. The house was then leased to William Iowa, who converted it to a wayside inn called Highbridge. Henry M. Barnett purchased the estate in 1922 and called it Barnett's Gardens. It continued unto the 1950s as a restaurant. The Park purchased the Robeson property in 1869, but this did not include the mansion, which was one of the oldest in the city.

1. Sidney George Fisher, The Diary of S.G.F., ed. by Nicholas Wainwright, (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), Sept. 3, 1863.

2. Campbell Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Vol. 97, p. 52.

3. Fisher, Diary, March 16, 1840.

4. Ibid, January 29, 1839.

CHAIN OF TITLE FOR LANSDOWNE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Reference</u>
25 April 1684	William Penn	Patrick Robinson	Patent Book A1 p. 45
10 December 1687	Patrick Robinson	Thomas Masters	Deed Book E Vol 5 652
20 June 1691	Thomas Masters	Daniel Pegg	Deed Bk. H 15 p.194
27 April 1696	Daniel Pegg	John Warner	Deed H 15 p. 196
20 November 1772	Judah Foulke, Sheriff	Margery Warner	Common Pleas Book B p. 201
6 December 1773	William Smith	John Penn	Deed E 11 493
26 March 1787	Mahlon Hill	John Penn	
17 December 1792	Margery Warner	John Penn	DB 38 235
9 March 1795	Ann Penn	James Greenleaf	55 p. 288 and 52, p. 44
11 April 1797	Jonathan Baker, Sheriff	William Bingham	EF No 23 p. 209
8 January 1798	William and Ann Bingham Deed of Trust	Thomas Willing Richard Willing	
21 December 1821	William Bingham Jr. Deed of Trust	Thomas Willing Alexander Baring	IH No 3 p. 1
8 March 1823	William Bingham approved trustee	R. Willing	IH No 10 p. 150
22 July 1823	Alexander Baring	Edward Lawford trustee	IH 10 0. 148
22 July 1823	Edward Lawford	Alexander Baring Richard Willing	IH No 8 p. 297
Continues on with trustee business until			
19 November 1853	Richard Willing Francis Baring	Richard Tucker Joseph Lovering Robert D. Cullen Isaac R. Davis George W. Richards Robert L. Martin	TH No 116 p. 229

19 November 1853	Tucker, Lovering et al.	Richard Willing Francis Baring	Mortgage Book TH No - P. -
21 November 1853	Tucker, Lovering, et. al.	Henry Townsend	trust
1866	property sold to city		

CHAIN OF TITLE FOR SEDGLEY

<u>Date</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Reference</u>
6/7 october 1708	William Penn	Henry Golding Joshua Gee Silvanus Grove John Wood Thoams Callowhill Thomas Oade Jeffery Pennel John Fields Thomas Cuppage Tract of land called Pennsylvania	EG Vol 7 p. 83
10 November 1711	Penn, Golding, et al	Edward Shippen Samuel Carpenter Richard Hill Isaac Norris James Logan To dispose of Pennsylvania	E 7 Vol 8 p. 125
10 May 1718	Hill, Norris, Logan	Jonathan Dickenson	Patent Book A Vol 5 p. 34
8 May 1722	Jonathan Dickenson	John Dickenson	Will Book D 317
25 March 1729	John Dickenson	Mary Jones, sister of John. She died without issue. Husband got land. Thento brother Edward	P p. 51
6 June 1744	John Hyatt, Sheriff	Oswald Peel	Acknowledged in open court
26 November 1747	Oswald Peel	Jacob Dubre	25 Acres I 16 p. 346
21 June 1768	Jacob Dubre	Jacob Dubre, Jr.	Will Bk. O 269
3 September 1774	Thomas Kinderdine Jacob Shoemaker, Jr. Executor for Dubre	Robert Morris	150 acres Vol 16 O. 363

6 June 1744	John Hyatt, Sheriff	James Hamilton	I 5 p. 261
12 May 1781	James Hamilton	Robert Morris	N 3 p. 27
30 October 1794	Robert Morris	Insurance Co. State of Pa	Mortgage Book 11 p. 186
28 March 1799	Jonathan Penrose, Sheriff	William Crammond	B 111
11 September 1806	John Smith, Marshall	Samuel Mifflin	A 189
23 July 1812	Samuel Mifflin	James Cowles Fisher	IH 3 p. 45
19 June 1847	Henry Silar, Sheriff	Samuel R. Frederic W Downer	Sheriff Deed Bk U p. 42
24 March 1851	Downer Brother	Ferdinand Dreer	GWC 86 p. 238
3 March 1857	Derdinand Dreer	Henry Cope	RDW 129 p. 141
8 April 1857	Henry Cope, Joseph Harrison, Thomas Ridgeway, Nathaniel Browne, George Biddle,	City of Philadelphia	RDW 129 p. 137

TAX RECORDS

County Tax Assessment Ledger
Blockley Township - Lansdowne

1802	William Bingham, Esq. 96 acres land 1 Dwelling	\$2,112	260 Acres 4 Dwellings	\$5,546
1803	210 Acres Land 1 Dwelling and William Bingham Estate House and Lot	\$3,050 \$100	96 Acres Land 1 Dwelling	\$2,112
1804	210 Acres Land 1 dwelling House and Lott	\$3,050 \$100	----	\$3,150
	96 Acres Land 1 dwelling	\$2,112		
1805	1 House and lot 35 Acres Land 2 Dwellings 100 Acres Land 1 Dwelling	\$120 \$2,100 \$2,112		
1806	1 House and Lot 35 Acres Land 2 Dwellings 100 Acres Land 1 Dwelling	\$120 \$2,100 \$2,112		
1807	1 House and Lot 35 Acres land 2 Dwellings 100 Acres 1 Dwelling	\$120 \$2,100 \$2,112	----	\$2,220
1808	30 Acres 2 Dwellings 100 Acres 1 Dwelling	\$2,250 \$2,000		
1809	100 Acres 1 Dwelling 260 Acres 2 Dwellings	\$2,000 \$4,250		

County Tax Assessment Ledger
Sedgley

1808	William Crammond			
	23 Acres Land	\$1,495		
	Improvements	\$3,750	----	\$5,245
1809	23 Acres Land	\$1,495		
	Improvements	\$3,750	----	\$5,245

This is an unusual entry if it is for Sedgley. Crammond was to have lost Sedgley in 1806, selling it in a Sheriff's sale to Samuel Mifflin.

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

Often, negative research is as useful as what you do find. A search was made of the insurance surveys for these two sites. Nothing was found. The Wills and Inventory Archives were scanned to see if any inventories were available. None were there. They may be located elsewhere.

Due to time constraints in the completion of this paper, the Penn Papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania were not consulted in depth. This is an area which warrants further research for Lansdowne Mansion.

There are also the Bonaparte Papers at Yale university which may reveal information about Joseph Bonaparte's stay in Philadelphia.